

# NERRS SCIENCE COLLABORATIVE UPDATE

## Top Five Tips for Funding Science that Gets Used\*

- 1. *Be clear about what you want, how you'll get there, and how those two are connected.*** Does your organization exist to generate credible science? Or do you exist to use credible science to solve problems? Answers to these questions will help you prioritize your investments and develop appropriate processes to reach your goals.
- 2. *Put your money where your mouth is.*** If your organization wants to fund science that links to decisions relatively quickly, then you will have to invest in the resources and expertise to get that done. Paying for the science alone won't do it.
- 3. *Make sure the team roster matches the team's goal.*** If your program's goal is to link science to decisions quickly, then the projects you fund need people who specialize in designing, implementing, and evaluating "participatory processes" and "public engagement" strategies that increase the credibility, relevance, and ultimately, the use, of applied science. These specialists need to be involved from the beginning of a project and in its design.
- 4. *Get refs who know the rules.*** Your proposal review process should reflect your commitment to linking science to decision making. That means bringing in reviewers with the cumulative expertise to evaluate all aspects of a proposal. A wetland ecologist, for example, should not be expected to review a proposal's plan for participatory process and public engagement.
- 5. *If you really want to fund science that solves problems, fund problem definition.*** Getting the problem framed correctly before the research is designed is critical; this step shouldn't be assumed or done for free. And guess what? Participatory process experts are needed to do this effectively as well.

\*Adapted from "Producing Science that Gets Used by Coastal Communities: What Funders Should Do to Link More Science with Decisions"

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